CHAPTER TWO SECRETS

For nearly a year, a serial killer stalked the streets of Gotham City.
His identity was unknown. Only that he struck on holidays.
Incredibly enough, just one person was shot at by "Holiday" and survived.
Why he was left alive remains something of a riddle to this day...
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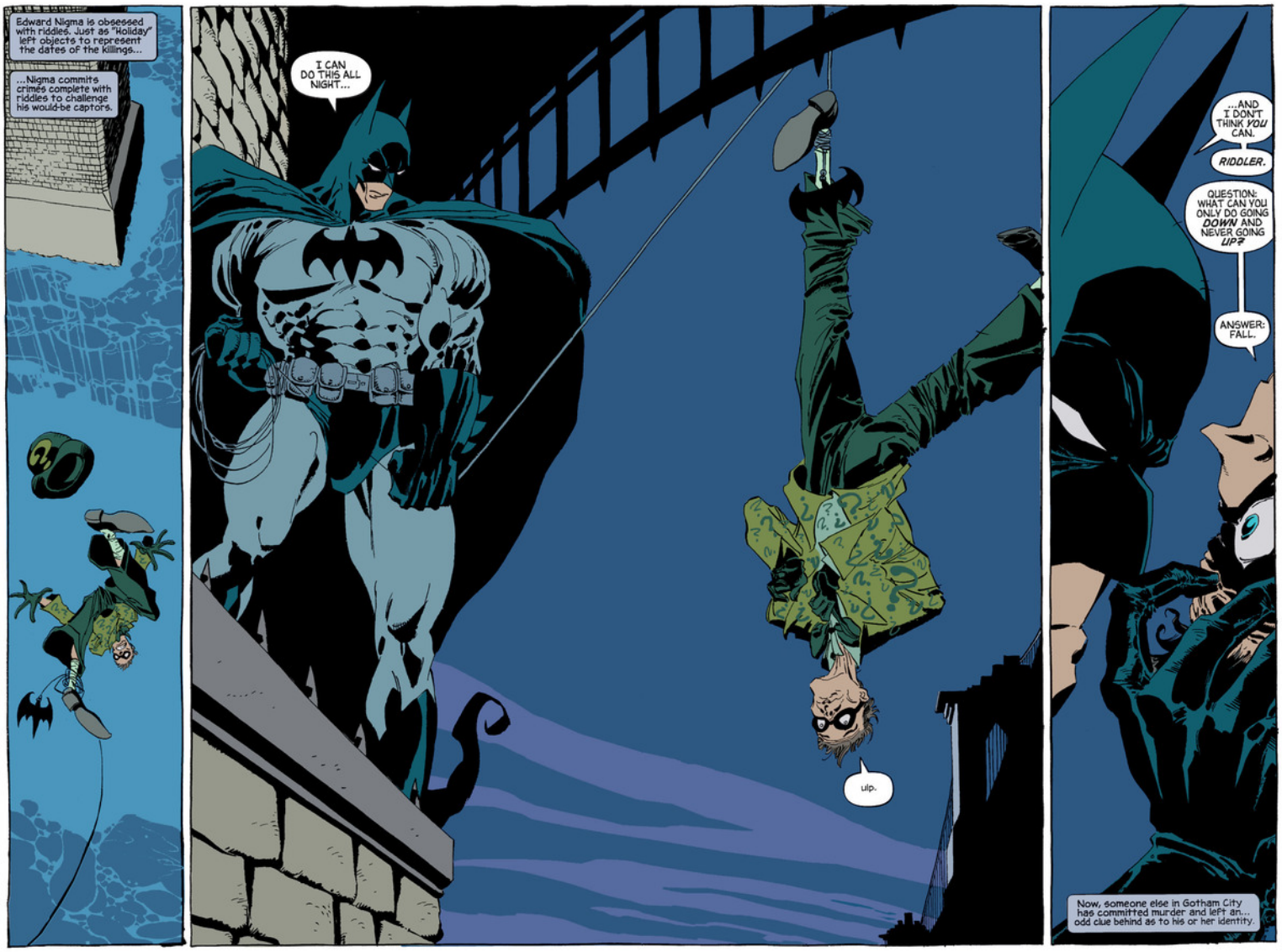
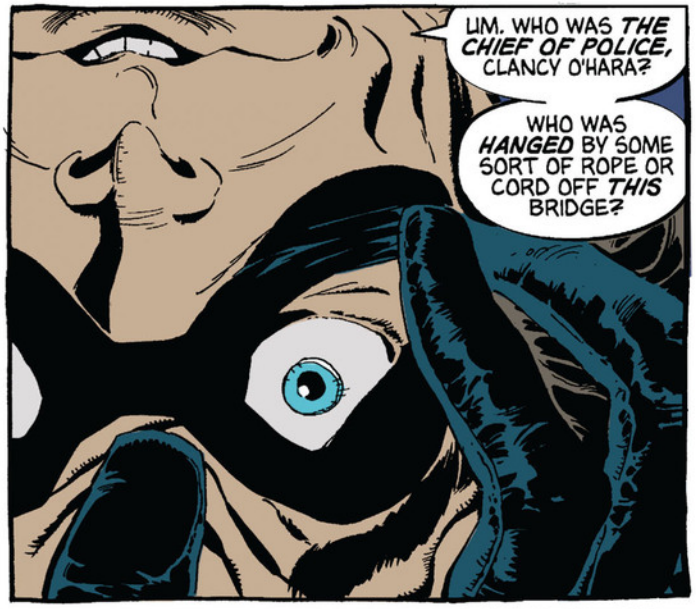

Edward Nigma is obsessed with riddles. Just as "Holiday" left objects to represent the dates of the killings...
...Nigma commits crimes complete with riddles to challenge his would-be captors.
I CAN DO THIS ALL NIGHT...
ulp.
...AND I DON'T THINK *YOU* CAN.
RIDDLER.
QUESTION: WHAT CAN YOU ONLY DO GOING *DOWN* AND NEVER GOING *UP?*
ANSWER: FALL.
Now, someone else in Gotham City has committed murder and left an... odd clue behind as to his or her identity.



THERE WAS A NOTE PINNED TO THE BODY.

THE POLICE KEPT IT OUT. FOR NOW.

THIS IS A COPY OF THE NOTE. IT DEPICTS A CHILDREN'S GAME.

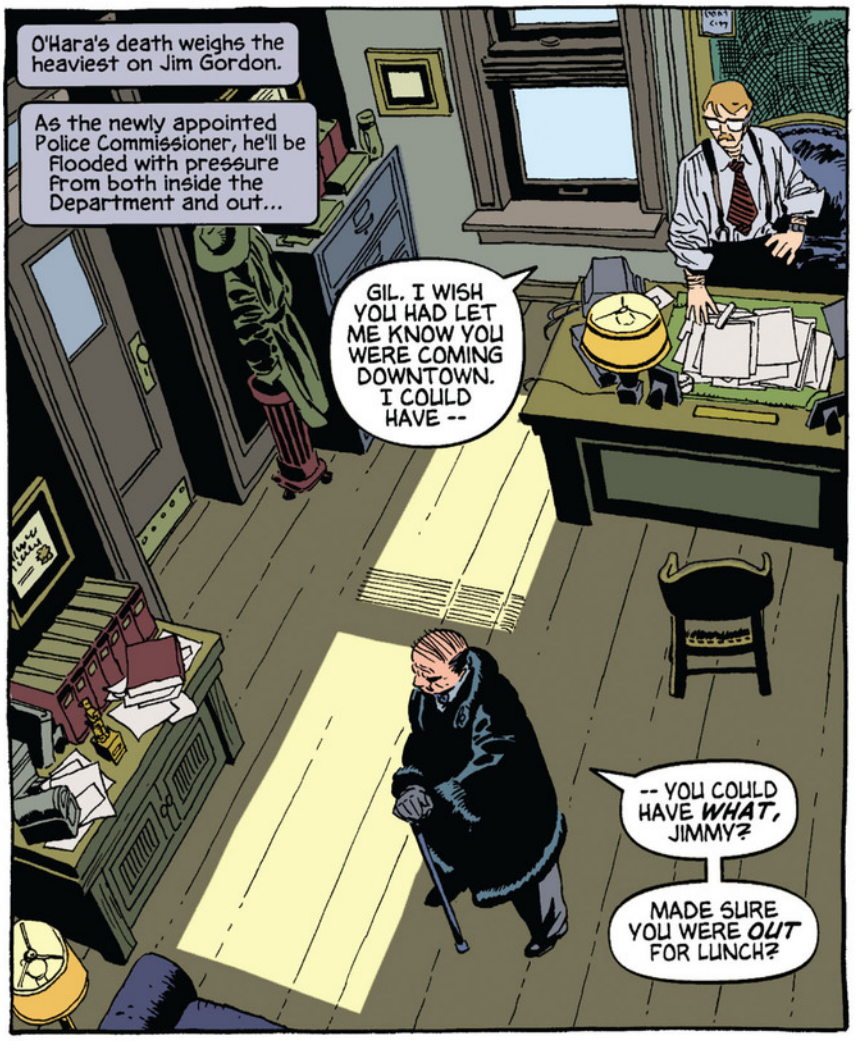
A NOTE? WHY WASN'T A NOTE MENTIONED IN THE NEWSPAPERS?

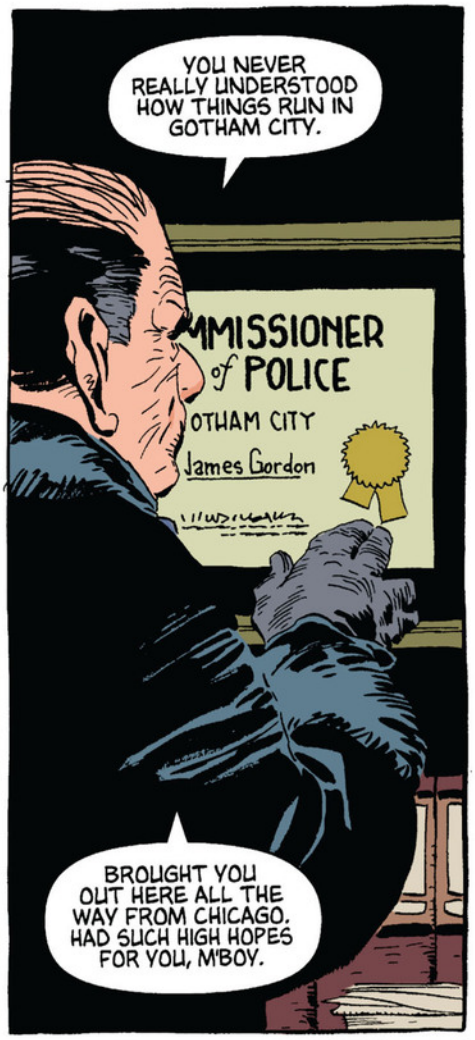
IT IS A CHALLENGE TO DO THIS UPSIDE DOWN.

IT'S "HANG MAN," ISN'T IT?

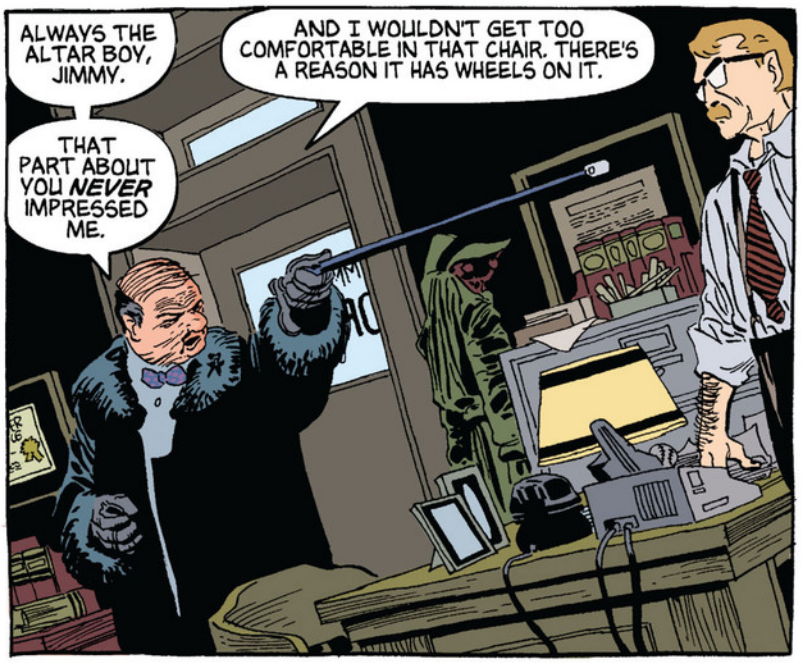
STUDY IT. COME BACK WITH SOMETHING I DON'T KNOW.

I ALWAYS LIKED THE VIEW FROM THAT CHAIR.


O'Hara's death weighs the heaviest on Jim Gordon.
As the newly appointed Police Commissioner, he'll be flooded with pressure from both inside the Department and out...
GIL. I WISH YOU HAD LET ME KNOW YOU WERE COMING DOWNTOWN. I COULD HAVE --
-- YOU COULD HAVE *WHAT*, JIMMY?
MADE SURE YOU WERE *OUT* FOR LUNCH?

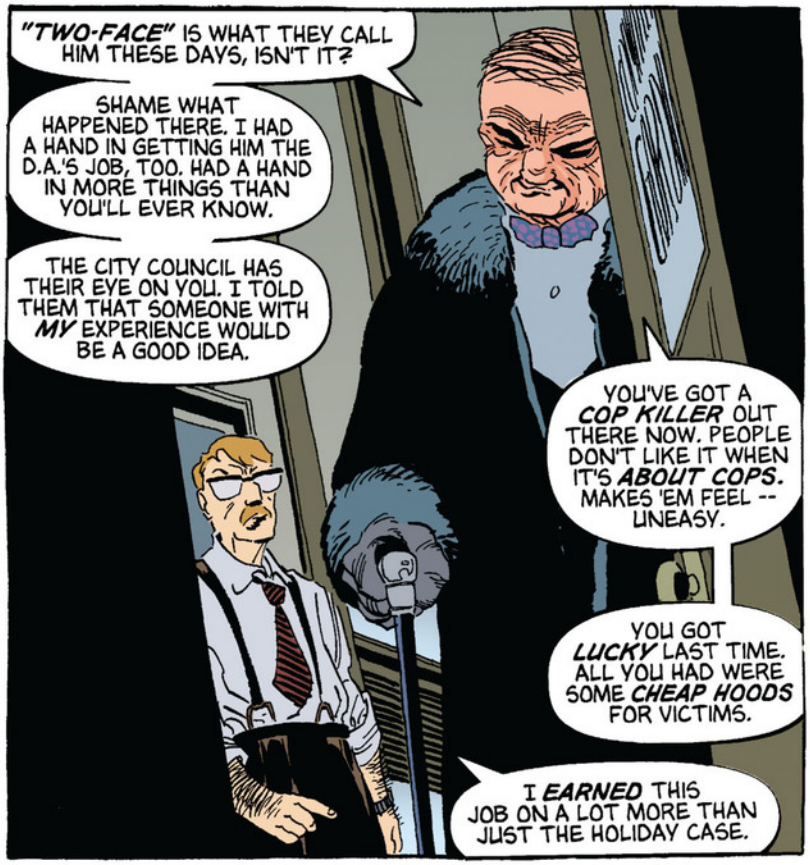

YOU NEVER REALLY UNDERSTOOD HOW THINGS RUN IN GOTHAM CITY.
MMISSIONER of POLICE
OTHAM CITY
James Gordon
BROUGHT YOU OUT HERE ALL THE WAY FROM CHICAGO. HAD SUCH HIGH HOPES FOR YOU, M'BOY.

Gotham City
I DIDN'T *TAKE* YOUR JOB, GIL.
YOU LOST IT IN A CESSPOOL OF *CORRUPTION* AND *GRAFT*.

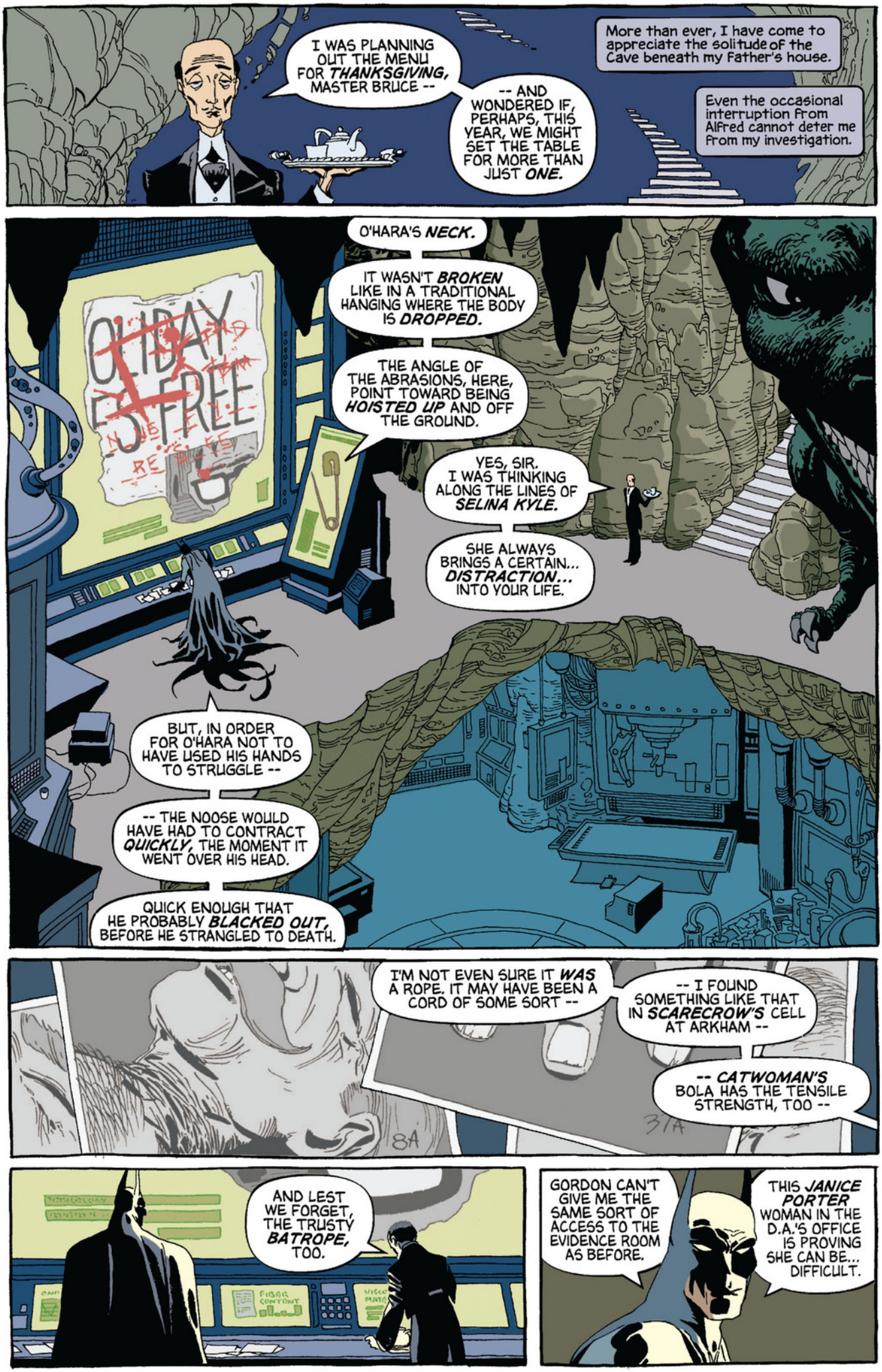

ALWAYS THE ALTAR BOY, JIMMY.
AND I WOULDN'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE IN THAT CHAIR. THERE'S A REASON IT HAS WHEELS ON IT.
THAT PART ABOUT YOU *NEVER* IMPRESSED ME.

YOU MIGHT HAVE RIDDEN IN HERE BY MAKING YOUR CONSTITUENTS THINK THEY COULD REST EASY AROUND THE *HOLIDAYS* --
-- BUT *ALBERTO FALCONE* IS OUT OF JAIL NOW AND *HARVEY DENT* IS --

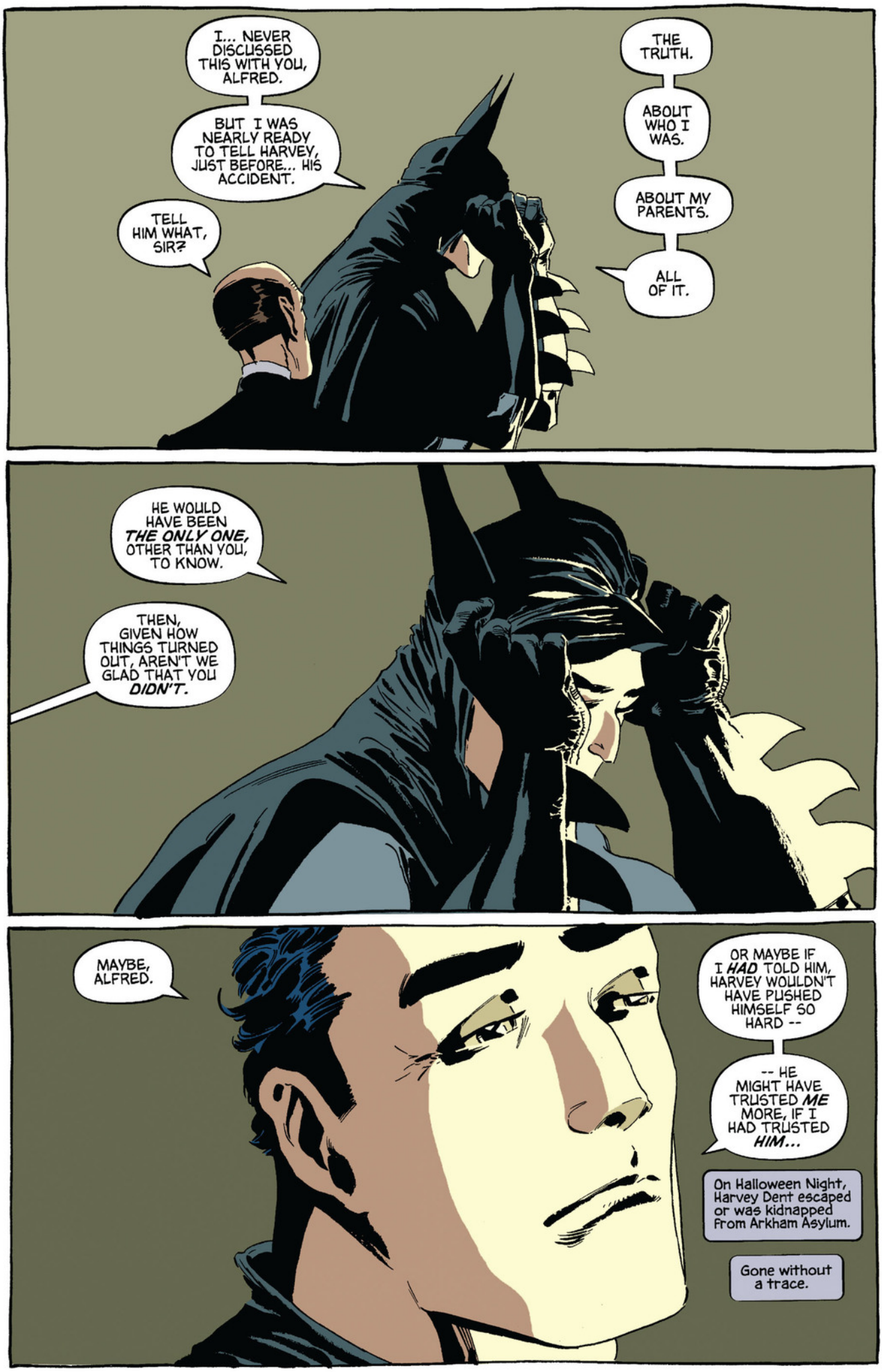
DON'T BRING *DENT* INTO THIS.


"TWO-FACE" IS WHAT THEY CALL HIM THESE DAYS, ISN'T IT?
SHAME WHAT HAPPENED THERE. I HAD A HAND IN GETTING HIM THE D.A.'S JOB, TOO. HAD A HAND IN MORE THINGS THAN YOU'LL EVER KNOW.
THE CITY COUNCIL HAS THEIR EYE ON YOU. I TOLD THEM THAT SOMEONE WITH *MY* EXPERIENCE WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA.
YOU'VE GOT A *COP KILLER* OUT THERE NOW. PEOPLE DON'T LIKE IT WHEN IT'S *ABOUT COPS.* MAKES 'EM FEEL -- UNEASY.
YOU GOT *LUCKY* LAST TIME. ALL YOU HAD WERE SOME *CHEAP HOODS* FOR VICTIMS.
I *EARNED* THIS JOB ON A LOT MORE THAN JUST THE HOLIDAY CASE.

YES, SIR. *ALWAYS* LIKED THAT VIEW...


I WAS PLANNING OUT THE MENU FOR THANKSGIVING, MASTER BRUCE --
-- AND WONDERED IF, PERHAPS, THIS YEAR, WE MIGHT SET THE TABLE FOR MORE THAN JUST ONE.
More than ever, I have come to appreciate the solitude of the Cave beneath my Father's house.
Even the occasional interruption from Alfred cannot deter me from my investigation.
O'HARA'S NECK.
IT WASN'T BROKEN LIKE IN A TRADITIONAL HANGING WHERE THE BODY IS DROPPED.
THE ANGLE OF THE ABRASIONS, HERE, POINT TOWARD BEING HOISTED UP AND OFF THE GROUND.
YES, SIR. I WAS THINKING ALONG THE LINES OF SELINA KYLE.
SHE ALWAYS BRINGS A CERTAIN... DISTRACTION... INTO YOUR LIFE.
BUT, IN ORDER FOR O'HARA NOT TO HAVE USED HIS HANDS TO STRUGGLE --
-- THE NOOSE WOULD HAVE HAD TO CONTRACT QUICKLY, THE MOMENT IT WENT OVER HIS HEAD.
QUICK ENOUGH THAT HE PROBABLY BLACKED OUT, BEFORE HE STRANGLED TO DEATH.
I'M NOT EVEN SURE IT WAS A ROPE. IT MAY HAVE BEEN A CORD OF SOME SORT --
-- I FOUND SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN SCARECROW'S CELL AT ARKHAM --
-- CATWOMAN'S BOLA HAS THE TENSILE STRENGTH, TOO --
AND LEST WE FORGET, THE TRUSTY BATROPE, TOO.
GORDON CAN'T GIVE ME THE SAME SORT OF ACCESS TO THE EVIDENCE ROOM AS BEFORE.
THIS JANICE PORTER WOMAN IN THE D.A.'S OFFICE IS PROVING SHE CAN BE... DIFFICULT.

A WORLD WITHOUT *HARVEY DENT* IN IT...
I WISH I COULD FIND HIM.
I SEARCHED HIS HOME. AN ENTIRELY *DIFFERENT* FAMILY LIVES THERE NOW...
...AND YET, I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THAT HARVEY IS PART OF *THIS* SOMEHOW.
BUT... I WAS WRONG ABOUT HIM BEING *HOLIDAY* AND...
...I CAN'T AFFORD TO BE WRONG AGAIN.
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH BEING WRONG, SIR.
EVEN *I'M* NOT INFALLIBLE ON THE OCCASION.
BATMAN CAN'T BE.


I... NEVER DISCUSSED THIS WITH YOU, ALFRED.
BUT I WAS NEARLY READY TO TELL HARVEY, JUST BEFORE... HIS ACCIDENT.
TELL HIM WHAT, SIR?
THE TRUTH.
ABOUT WHO I WAS.
ABOUT MY PARENTS.
ALL OF IT.
HE WOULD HAVE BEEN THE ONLY ONE, OTHER THAN YOU, TO KNOW.
THEN, GIVEN HOW THINGS TURNED OUT, AREN'T WE GLAD THAT YOU DIDN'T.
MAYBE, ALFRED.
OR MAYBE IF I HAD TOLD HIM, HARVEY WOULDN'T HAVE PUSHED HIMSELF SO HARD --
-- HE MIGHT HAVE TRUSTED ME MORE, IF I HAD TRUSTED HIM...
On Halloween Night, Harvey Dent escaped or was kidnapped from Arkham Asylum.
Gone without a trace.

For decades, the Gotham City crime cartel was ruled by the Falcone Family.

Carmine "The Roman" Falcone being the last true crime lord until Harvey Dent sent him to his grave.

A grave that has now been... disturbed.

I DON'T APPRECIATE BEING ***SUMMONED*** OUT HERE IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, FALCONE.

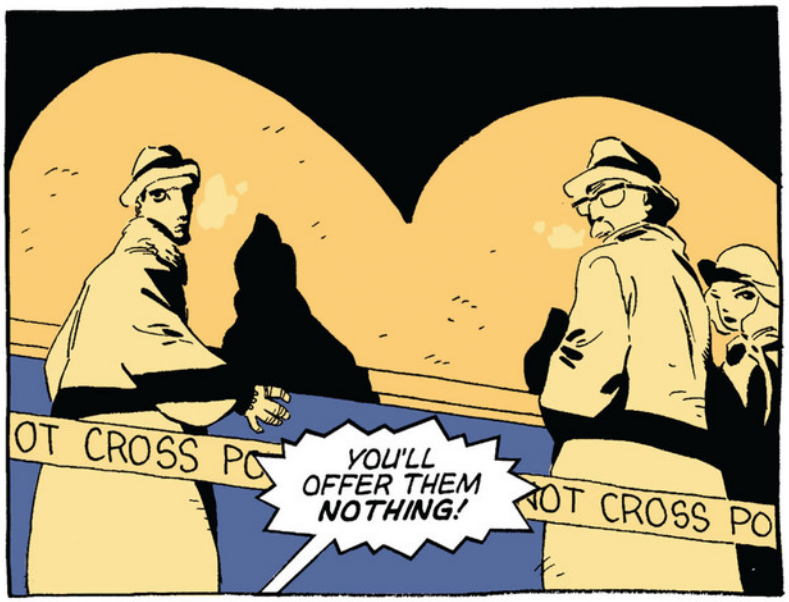
I HAVE TO AGREE WITH JIM ON THIS ONE, MARIO.

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE ISN'T SOME ALL-NIGHT GAS STATION THAT YOU CAN JUST PULL INTO AND USE.

"MARIO"?

I ***UNDERSTAND*** BOTH OF YOUR CONCERNS AND I AM IN ***NO WAY*** TRYING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MY... OF EITHER OF YOU ***OR*** YOUR TIME.

BUT THE ***DISAPPEARANCE*** OF MY FATHER'S BODY AND THE SUBSEQUENT ***DISMEMBERMENT*** OF HIS HAND HAS ***MY SISTER SOFIA...***



YOU'D GO TO THIS COP? THIS FRIEND OF DENT'S?
GORDON CAN'T EVEN KEEP HIS OWN PEOPLE SAFE. WHAT'S HE GOING TO DO FOR US?

THE FAMILY WILL HANDLE THIS, ALBERTO. NOT SOME OUTSIDER.

YOU MEAN, "MARIO."
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
SOFIA. YOU... JUST CALLED ME "ALBERTO."
I DID NOT.
I SHOULD KNOW WHO MY OWN BROTHER IS --
-- EVEN IF HE ISN'T ACTING LIKE ONE!

THESE MEN ARE PRIVATE DETECTIVES HIRED TO PROTECT MY FATHER'S GRAVE. THEY'RE LICENSED TO CARRY FIREARMS.
IF ANY OF YOU INTERFERE WITH THEM, YOU'LL HAVE TO SHOW CAUSE IN FRONT OF A JUDGE IN THE MORNING.

FINE.
WHATEVER.

WHAT A LOVELY BUNCH OF COCONUTS.
I GUESS.
JIM, I'M SORRY I EVEN DRAGGED YOU INTO THIS.
I JUST DIDN'T FEEL COMFORTABLE... MEETING FALCONE IN A GRAVEYARD AT NIGHT!

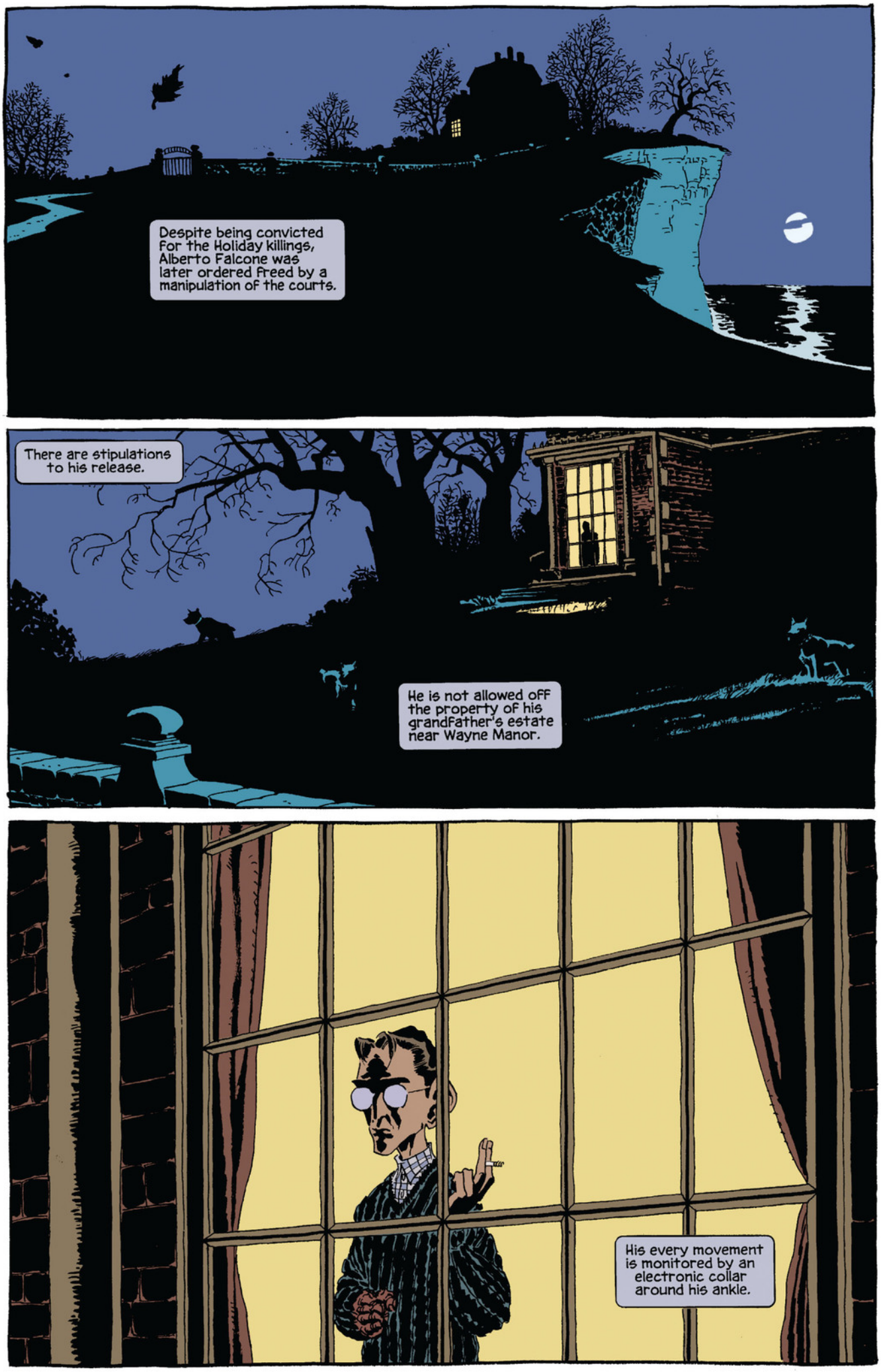
IT'S -- NOT LIKE I WAS DOING ANYTHING ELSE.

I, UM, DIDN'T MEAN --
LOOK, I KNOW YOU'RE GOING THROUGH SOME TOUGH TIMES AT HOME --
-- AND YOU DON'T NEED ME MAKING IT ANY WORSE AT WORK.

I KNOW THIS IS OUT OF THE BLUE -- BUT DO YOU WANT TO HAVE THANKSGIVING DINNER TOGETHER?
MAYBE GET STARTED OFF ON A NEW FOOT --
I APPRECIATE THE OFFER, JIM, I REALLY DO. BUT I'VE ALREADY GOT DINNER PLANS.
YOU DO?
YES.
WHY DO YOU SOUND SO SURPRISED?

I JUST THOUGHT -- BEING NEW TO TOWN -- NOT REALLY KNOWING ANYONE --
-- YOU'D --
-- YOU WOULDN'T HAVE PLANS, THAT'S ALL.
WELL, I DO.
CAN WE GO NOW? IT'S COLD.

COCONUTS...


Despite being convicted for the Holiday killings, Alberto Falcone was later ordered freed by a manipulation of the courts.
There are stipulations to his release.
He is not allowed off the property of his grandfather's estate near Wayne Manor.
His every movement is monitored by an electronic collar around his ankle.

YOU CAN'T STOP NOW.
WHO IS THAT?
THEY'LL FORGET YOU.
COME OUT FROM BEHIND --
-- THERE..!
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?
ANSWER ME!
WHO ARE YOU?!

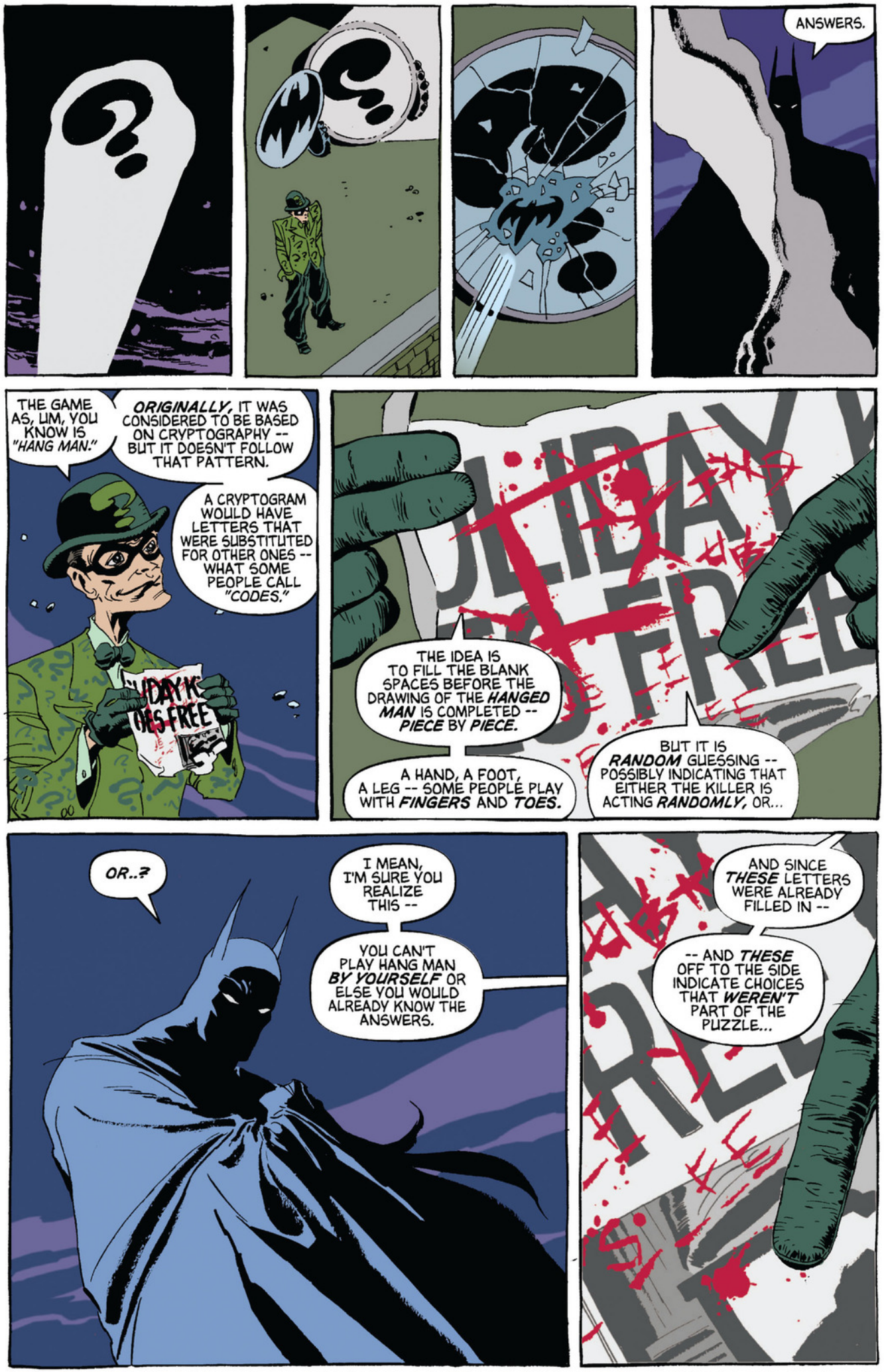
HOTEL EXET
Thanksgiving in Gotham City.
2402

YOU'RE HUNGRY, AREN'T YOU?

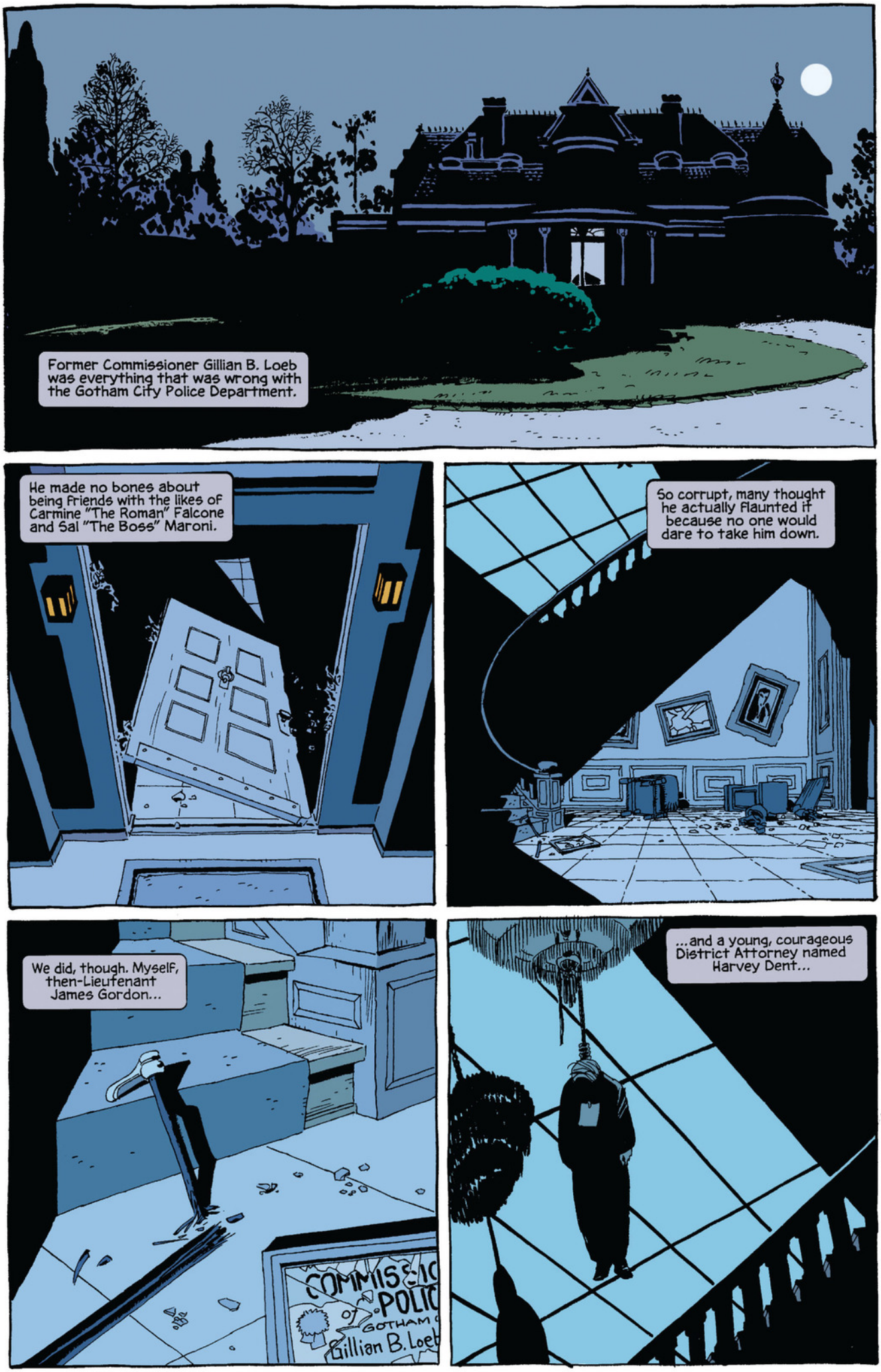
WELL, WE CERTAINLY CAN BE THANKFUL THAT MISS KYLE DIDN'T HAVE A PREVIOUS COMMITMENT FOR THIS EVENING...
AND AREN'T WE THANKFUL THAT BRUCE WAYNE, MILLIONAIRE PLAYBOY, HAD ROOM IN HIS BUSY SCHEDULE?
Hmm?
OH, BUSY... RIGHT, SELINA.
Thanksgiving in my Father's house.
Mostly, I remember waiting until he would come home from the hospital before we could eat.
The turkey was often cold by then.
Even so, I had the sense that this meal is intended to be with Family...
...of which I have none...
IF YOU SHOULD REQUIRE ANYTHING ELSE...
THANKS, ALFRED.
I THINK WE CAN HANDLE IT FROM HERE ON IN.

HI.

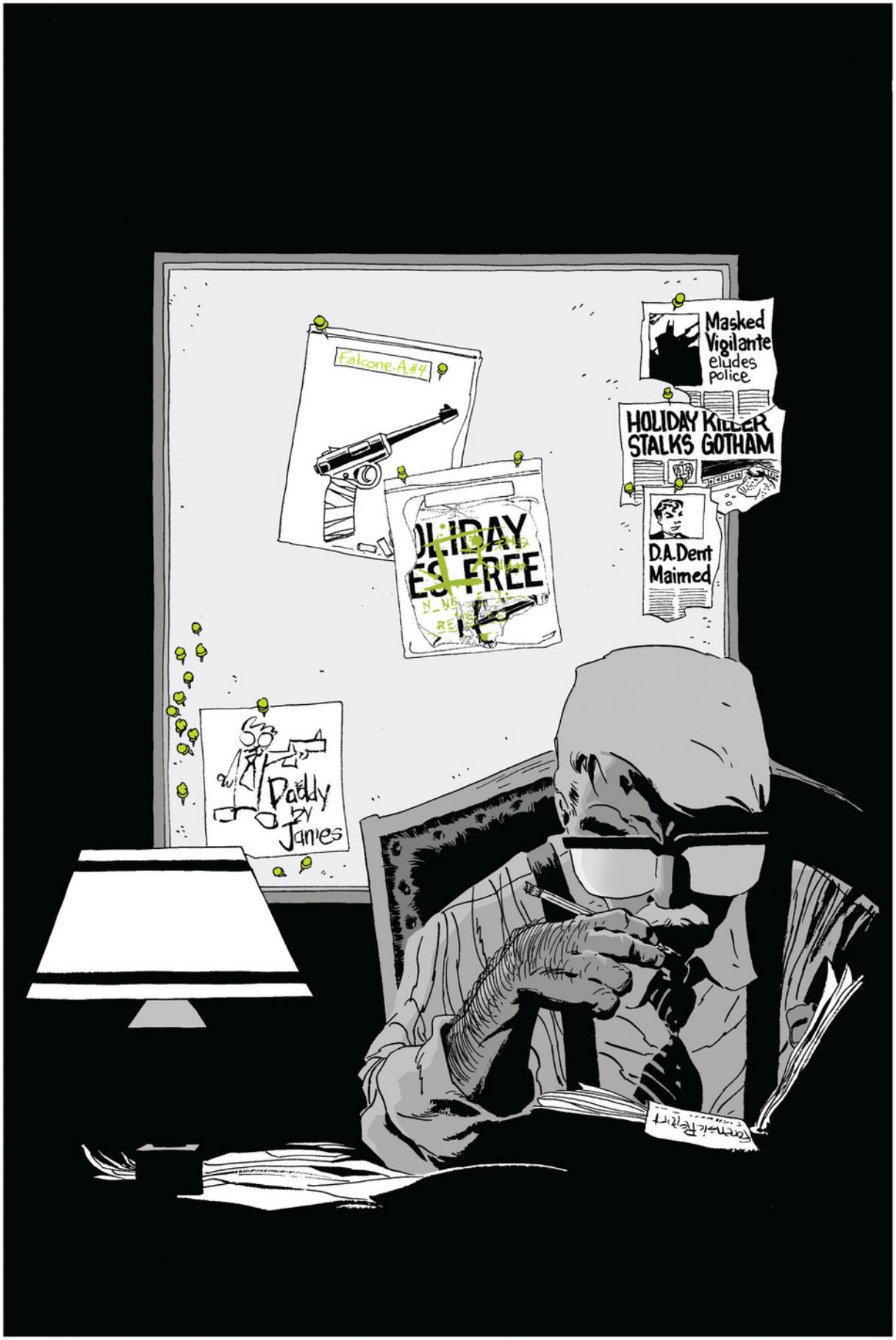
REMEMBER ME?


ANSWERS.
THE GAME AS, UM, YOU KNOW IS "HANG MAN."
ORIGINALLY, IT WAS CONSIDERED TO BE BASED ON CRYPTOGRAPHY -- BUT IT DOESN'T FOLLOW THAT PATTERN.
A CRYPTOGRAM WOULD HAVE LETTERS THAT WERE SUBSTITUTED FOR OTHER ONES -- WHAT SOME PEOPLE CALL "CODES."
THE IDEA IS TO FILL THE BLANK SPACES BEFORE THE DRAWING OF THE HANGED MAN IS COMPLETED -- PIECE BY PIECE.
A HAND, A FOOT, A LEG -- SOME PEOPLE PLAY WITH FINGERS AND TOES.
BUT IT IS RANDOM GUESSING -- POSSIBLY INDICATING THAT EITHER THE KILLER IS ACTING RANDOMLY, OR...
OR..?
I MEAN, I'M SURE YOU REALIZE THIS --
YOU CAN'T PLAY HANG MAN BY YOURSELF OR ELSE YOU WOULD ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWERS.
AND SINCE THESE LETTERS WERE ALREADY FILLED IN --
-- AND THESE OFF TO THE SIDE INDICATE CHOICES THAT WEREN'T PART OF THE PUZZLE...

...I'D HAVE TO GUESS THAT THIS IS A GAME BEING PLAYED BY *TWO* PEOPLE.
DID... DID YOU ALREADY KNOW ALL THAT?
BATMAN?
SO...
...WHAT DO A HANG MAN AND A PIANO PLAYER HAVE IN COMMON?
THEY BOTH NEED A
-HEH-
"*CORD*" TO STRIKE!
HA HA HE HA!
GOD, I *LOVE* THAT ONE...


Former Commissioner Gillian B. Loeb was everything that was wrong with the Gotham City Police Department.
He made no bones about being friends with the likes of Carmine "The Roman" Falcone and Sal "The Boss" Maroni.
So corrupt, many thought he actually flaunted it because no one would dare to take him down.
We did, though. Myself, then-Lieutenant James Gordon...
...and a young, courageous District Attorney named Harvey Dent...

FROM THE DESK OF HARVEY DENT D.A.
LOEB
SALE
1999


Falcone.A.#4
Masked Vigilante eludes police
HOLIDAY KILLER STALKS GOTHAM
D.A. Dent Maimed
Daddy by James